

VZCZCXRO4481
PP RUEHAG RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHLH RUEHPW RUEHROV
DE RUEHAH #1155 2471716
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 031716Z SEP 08
FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1464
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 4237
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2049
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1914
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 2485
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2839

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASHGABAT 001155

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/03/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: BERDIMUHAMEDOV EMPHASIZES TURKMENISTAN'S
NEUTRALITY ON GEORGIA

REF: ASHGABAT 1069

Classified By: Charge Sylvia Reed Curran for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) During a September 3 meeting with Deputy Assistant Secretary George Krol (septel), President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, emphasizing the country's neutral position on the conflict in Georgia, said Turkmenistan will not support Georgia, Russia, or South Ossetia. He said it is always tragic when people die, and Turkmenistan takes a "humanitarian" view of the conflict.

¶2. (C) Berdimuhamedov said Turkmenistan had been approached about supplying humanitarian aid to Georgia and to South Ossetia. However, these requests had been made without supplying concrete addresses for where to send aid. Without definite addresses, who would receive this aid? He also understood that much aid had been pilfered by North Ossetian authorities. "It's not surprising," he laughed. In any case, he added, Afghanistan needs help more, and Turkmenistan already gives aid to this neighbor.

¶3. (C) Regarding the tensions between Russia and the United States caused by this conflict, Berdimuhamedov said, in his opinion, America is a superpower, but so is Russia. Third countries don't want to be caught in the middle, so it would be wise not to involve third countries in the matter. Such an approach, helps the world community. He underlined again that Turkmenistan is an independent, neutral country. He committed to a strong relationship with the United States and noted that Russia is a difficult partner. Russia, he asserted, like many others, always comes wanting something from the Turkmen side. In contrast, America, he noted, comes offering, not taking.

¶4. (C) COMMENT: Turkmenistan realizes that its status as a permanently neutral country helps it from getting entangled in what it views as other people's fights. The Georgian Ambassador recently told us that he has been trying unsuccessfully for weeks to meet with Foreign Minister Meredov to discuss the conflict. Meredov finally promised him that they would meet at the end of the week when visiting delegations will have left. However, Meredov noted, while the Georgian would be free to share his views, he knows Turkmenistan's answer before he starts. END COMMENT.

15. (C) DAS Krol cleared this cable.
CURRAN